

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7739
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 2977

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PDEV, ETSU, PEPR, SU
SUBJ: NIMEIRI JULY 5 INTERVIEW

1. MOST SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF NIMEIRI'S JULY 5 INTERVIEW
OTHER THAN SUDAN'S OIL PROSPECTS WHICH COVERED IN SEPTTEL
WAS HIS DISCUSSION OF ERITREA. NIMEIRI REVIEWED HISTORICAL
BACKGROUND OF QUESTION NOTING THAT ERITREA HAD NEVER BEEN
IN ETHIOPIAN TERRITORY BUT WAS INDEPENDENT STATE OCCUPIED BY
ITALY FOLLOWING WORLD WAR II. HE NOTED THAT IT WAS FEDERATED
TO ETHIOPIA WHICH LATER ANNEXED IT AS AN ETHIOPIAN PROVINCE
"IRRESPECTIVE OF ERITREANS WILL." NIMEIRI EMPHASIZED THAT
THE SOLUTION TO THE ERITREAN PROBLEM SHOULD BE THROUGH
"POLITICAL ACTION BY ETHIOPIA AND THE AFRICAN STATES." HE
ADDED THAT SUDAN DOES NOT BELIEVE IN MILITARY ACTION TO
SOLVE SUCH DISPUTES BECAUSE IT WOULD BRING ABOUT FOREIGN
INTERFERENCE. SOMEWHAT AMBIGUOUSLY NIMEIRI SAID THAT
"ERITREANS ARE STANDING FOR SELF-DETERMINATION AS GUARANTEED
BY THE HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENT." NIMEIRI AVOIDED A QUESTION
ABOUT WHETHER THE EMERGENCE OF INDEPENDENT ERITREA WOULD
HELP REALIZE THE ARAB OBJECTIVE OF MAKING THE RED SEA AN
ARAB LAKE. NIMEIRI DENIED ANY SUCH ARAB OBJECTIVES,
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SAYING THAT THEIR GOAL IS A "PEACEFUL RED SEA."

2. IN THE SAME INTERVIEW NIMEIRI NEATLY GLOSSED OVER
DIFFERENCES IN THE ARAB WORLD ARISING FROM DIFFERENT
APPROACHES TO MIDDLE EAST PEACE. HE SPOKE AS CHAIRMAN
OF THE ARAB LEAGUE SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE AND SAID LITTLE THAT
EITHER PROPONENTS OR OPPONENTS OF SADAT'S PEACE INITIATIVES

COULD OBJECT TO. HOWEVER, HE SPECIFICALLY NOTED THAT SOME STATES WHICH OBJECT TO DIRECT EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI CONTACTS WOULD ACCEPT GOING BACK TO GENEVA. HE ALSO IMPLIED THAT AS LONG AS DIRECT ARAB-ISRAELI CONTACTS CONTINUE AN ARAB SUMMIT WOULD NOT BE CONVENED.

3. ASKED WHETHER THE SUPER POWERS AIMED AT DOMINATING OIL PRODUCING AREAS, NIMEIRI INDICATED THEIR IMPORTANCE TO THE WORLD BECAUSE OF ACUTE ENERGY SHORTAGES AND SAID THAT THESE OIL PRODUCING AREAS "SHOULD PLAY AN EFFECTIVE ROLE IN SOLVING THE CONFLICT OF SUPER POWERS BY IMPLEMENTING THEIR OWN STRATEGIES." HE SAID THAT TO AVOID MILITARY CONFRONTATION THE TWO SUPER POWERS "UTILIZE DETENTE TO DOMINATE OIL PRODUCING AREAS BY EXPLOITING UNDER-DEVELOPED AND SECOND LINE STATES. IN THIS THE SOVIETS ARE AHEAD OF THE USA."

4. COMMENT: NIMEIRI'S COMMENTS ON ERITREA MAY WELL SPARK A REACTION FROM ADDIS ABABA. INTERVIEW APPEARS TO BE BADLY GARBLED PRESENTATION OF NIMEIRI'S REMARKS. WE DO NOT THINK THAT IT POINTS TO ANY NEW DEPARTURE IN SUDANESE POLICY VIS-A-VIS ERITREA AND ETHIOPIA.
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